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Katherine Benson invited as delegate to China this summer

Summary: Katherine Benson will be among over 100 women nationwide to represent the Women in Higher Education Professional Delegation to China. The delegates will visit the cities of Beijing, Xi'an and Kunming in China this summer.

(April 19, 2007)-When Katherine Benson learned last December that she had been invited as a delegate to visit China, she didn't hesitate: "I said, 'Yes! I want to do this!'" said Benson. Benson, an associate professor of psychology at UMM, will be among over 100 women nationwide to represent the Women in Higher Education Professional Delegation to China. The delegates will visit the cities of Beijing, Xi'an and Kunming in China this summer.

Dr. Margaret Eisenhart, university distinguished professor of educational anthropology and research methodology at the University of Colorado, extended the invitation: "A delegation of professionals specializing in women in higher education has been selected to participate in bilateral exchanges with their professional counterparts in China, under the auspices of People to People Ambassador Programs," explained the program's Web site.

Benson said she was selected as a delegate due to the number of papers, invited addresses, symposia, etc., she has written and presented relating to women in higher education. She finds the opportunity exciting. "We will be meeting with Chinese women's scholars and it will be an opportunity to make connections for purposes of collaboration," said Benson. Although Benson has traveled to North Africa and attended conferences in Europe, she looks forward with great anticipation to her first visit to China and to exploring its culture. "To what extent do women in China face discrimination?" she wonders, for example.

While in Beijing, the group will discuss the political and cultural diversity of China and receive further information on the delegation. They will participate in programs focusing on women students and administrators in colleges and universities, college and university women in science, business and technology. They will experience Old Beijing's culture and customs while spending time with a family in the old Hutong area of Beijing.

In Xi'an, they will learn about trends in women's participation and success rates in higher education, women's experience in the workforce and historical perspectives on women in higher education.

In addition to the education and collaborative component, there will be time for tours, including visits to the Great Wall and the Stone Forest in Kunming.

In 2003 Benson was an invited chair for "Prioritization of Race and Class Over Gender," a session on human rights and gender discrimination, and an invited panelist for "The Other Half of the Equation: Women Leaders in Jesuit Colleges and Universities," Oxford Round Table, Exeter College in the University of Oxford, Oxford England. In 1991, she attended the NATO Advanced Research Workshop on Autobiographical Memory held in Grange-Over-Sands, Cumbria, U.K. Also in 1991, she attended a Conference on Memory at the University of Lancaster, U.K. and has attended national

and regional conferences on women in higher education, including an invited symposium for the Midwestern Psychological Association, 1994, in Chicago. She has also written, presented or been an invited participant in panel sessions on the topics of the future of women in higher education, gender issues in the classroom and on the campus, women's advancement in academia, and promotion and tenure issues and strategies, among others.

In 1956 citizen leaders such as entertainer Bob Hope, Olympic champion Jesse Owens, Hallmark Cards founder Joyce Hall and amusement creator Walt Disney founded with then President Dwight D. Eisenhower an organization to promote world peace and understanding: People to People. To find out more about People to People Ambassador Programs, visit [People to People](#).

For Katherine Benson, the prospect of this opportunity is multi-dimensional: "It's exciting to travel when you have a work component," said Benson. "It adds a dimension to the trip and enhances the experience."

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